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ABSTRACT

This booklet is an attempt to demonstrate how to develop an international cooperative education program based on the example of Nassau Community College's London Retailing Co-op program. The booklet's five sections focus on specifics of the model, beginning with the history and background of the Nassau Community College program. The following section provides information on program development and design, and includes discussions on tailoring the program to community college students, assessing feasibility, gaining administrative approval, course credits and outlines, coordinator's compensation, job placements, travel arrangements, housing, and participant evaluation. The last two sections offer suggestions for recruiting and selecting participants, preparing for departure, and things to do after arrival overseas. The booklet contains three appendixes: a program timetable, a sample disclaimer waiver and release of liability, and a student-review checklist. (KC)

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Developing an International Work Program

The Nassau Community College London Retailing Co-op Model

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A MANUAL ON DEVELOPING AN INTERNATIONAL WORK PROGRAM:

The Nassau Community College London Retailing Co-op Model

by

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Marilyn Chaifetz

INTRODUCTION

At the same time community colleges are facing budget cuts, they are being asked to supply a more rounded and internationally competitive work force in order to meet the global needs of commerce and industry: young people who can function and interrelate in a world marketplace. Community colleges must respond; they must explore the many educational avenues available to accomplish this goal. One such avenue that has been developed successfully at Nassau Community College is an international cooperative education program.

The theory of cooperative education is to have students work for appropriate business firms, institutions and/or agencies. The students earn college credit while learning self-sufficiency. The practical experience obtained in this type of program is invaluable and enables students to better evaluate their eventual career goals while still in school. With participation in an international co-op program, students become more cognizant of the differences between countries, including their economic systems, and well equipped to take on the internationalization of the nineties.

For the past 14 years, as a professor in the Marketing/Retailing/Fashion Department at Nassau Community College in Garden City, New York, I have coordinated the London Retailing Co-op Program. This program allows a group of 14 to 25 Nassau Community College students to travel to London each year to work for a period of nine weeks. During that time the students are employed in specialty and department stores in London, gaining work experience related to their marketing or retailing majors, and receiving college credit.

In 1990, I began research on whether there was sufficient interest in international programs which focus principally on work experience. My objective was to write a manual to assist other com-

munity and two-year colleges in developing programs based upon the Nassau Community College model.

The first phase of my research involved polling 90 two-year colleges with retailing and fashion programs. Information was gathered on the availability of international or cooperative education programs, the number of students and faculty in each particular program, and the proper administrator's knowledge of international work possibilities.

My research revealed that three quarters of the schools contacted had strong ongoing cooperative education programs. Approximately 90 percent of those interviewed had a desire to explore the possibility of initiating a program with an international work component for students, particularly if it could be developed in conjunction with an ongoing cooperative education program. Additionally, I met with personnel executives of various business firms in London and Paris as well as the staff of CIEE and its cooperating organizations. Their response indicated that the Nassau Community College model could be expanded readily to other cities, countries, and disciplines.

This manual is an attempt to demonstrate how to develop an international cooperative education program based on the example of Nassau Community College's London Retailing Co-op program. Although this model may have to be adapted to particular institutions or disciplines, I have tried to address the obstacles and barriers which would be of concern to all faculty and administrators.

1

THE NASSAU COMMUNITY COLLEGE MODEL

History and Background

When first employed at Nassau Community College in 1976, I found that there was already in place an extremely strong and viable cooperative retail program. Because of this, I felt strongly that a cooperative program could be expanded abroad.

A holiday trip to England in the summer of 1977 presented me with the opportunity to investigate the possibilities for the development of this program. Under my chairman's authorization, I wrote to various well-known retail establishments in London informing them about the co-op concept. While in London, I met with several representatives who had responded to my letter. By the time I left I had a commitment from three retail establishments for 12 cooperative positions for the following summer. I did not realize that the acceptance by the stores was just the beginning: there is a lot more work involved in this type of program than just obtaining jobs for students.

When I returned to Nassau Community in September, I obtained final approval of the program from the college. I then wrote to the London firms to confirm their job commitments for the following summer and pursued qualified students from the Marketing/Retailing/Fashion Department who were interested in living and working abroad. Faculty members in my department were most helpful by promoting the program in their classes. Approximately 50 students

expressed interest in the program and came to the first exploratory meeting. These students came from all areas of the marketing department, not just retailing, and the initial reaction was enthusiastic. In this manual you will find the specifics about the development of a program that has thrived for the past 14 years.

Relationship to CIEE's Work Abroad Program

Because of the work component of Nassau Community College's London Retailing Co-op, students must obtain the proper authorization to be employed in the United Kingdom. Such permission normally would be difficult to obtain; however, participants in the London Retailing Co-op also enroll in the *Work Abroad* program of the Council on International Educational Exchange. *Work Abroad* is an exchange program which allows U.S. students to receive authorization to work legally in 11 countries overseas, including the United Kingdom. This reciprocal program allows students from the United Kingdom and the other participating countries to spend working holidays in the United States. The cost of the CIEE program for academic year 1992–93 is $125.

The *Work in Britain* program is co-sponsored by the British Universities North America Club (BUNAC)—London. BUNAC is a nonprofit, student-run organization that operates a number of reciprocal work programs. Aside from receiving the special Blue Card Work Permit, participating in the *Work in Britain* program also affords the London Retailing Co-op students the support services of BUNAC while in the United Kingdom. In a sense, therefore, the London Retailing Co-op is a program run within the structure of the *Work Abroad* program.

2

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN

Tailoring to the Community College Student

Structure and student preparation are the keys to making the London Retailing Co-op program work for community and two-year college students. Although it is possible for a student to join the *Work Abroad* program and get a job independently, there are many reasons for tailoring a program specifically for community- and two-year college students. The primary concern is the emotional and psychological maturity of the student. As a general rule, because of economic restraints and a number of other factors, many community- and two-year college students have not traveled abroad or spent much time away from their parents. In many cases they have had no experience living independently. This can add up to an initially difficult adjustment time abroad and is one of the reasons faculty support is necessary prior to, and during, the first few weeks of the work experience.

Students going abroad derive a great sense of security from knowing as much as they can about the experience beforehand. Living with people they know, having a job, and knowing about their living accommodations bolsters confidence in both students and their parents. The fact that the students are flying together with the professor, who will be with them for at least 10 or 12 days for support, also helps overcome initial anxieties.

Assessing Feasibility

Before creating a program, you must assess student interest at your institution. This can be done simply by enlisting the support of other faculty members at a departmental or college-wide meeting to conduct a survey of student interest in their classes.

In addition to student interest, a strong cooperative education focus on campus can be an indicator of success of an international work program. Many students in the Nassau Community College program had previously participated in a domestic co-op before their London experience.

Faculty promotion of the co-op program is absolutely essential to its success. If the program is properly explained in class, taking time to note how it complements studies, attracting participants should not be a problem. The presenter's enthusiasm and belief in the value of the program is potentially the most powerful means of attracting student interest. Another means of initially attracting participants and interesting faculty is to stress the foreign travel aspect of the program.

A general departmental letter to students explaining the proposed program and the linkage between working abroad and receiving credit in their major is also an effective means of promoting the program. However, this letter should be distributed only after administrative approval for the program has been obtained. Any method of promotion should announce an informational meeting to be held in October, including the date and time, for all interested students.

Administrative Approval

Once it has been determined that a co-op program would attract a sufficient number of participants, administrative approval is usually necessary to start setting up the program. The administrator will need to know the work involved in developing the program before giving permission to the coordinator to place telephone calls and make arrangements. Sufficient time must be granted to the coordinator to organize the program; legal expertise must be approved to help prepare a waiver for the students and parents (for sample, see Appendix B); and, if necessary, a short trip abroad approved to secure placements. Administrative approval should not prove dif-

ficult, however, as many aspects of this program model should make it attractive to the administration of a community college.

Arguably the strongest advantage for an administrator is that this program can be run on a very limited budget; furthermore, it also can offer community colleges a way to internationalize their curricula relatively easily. If a domestic co-op program is already in existence, this can be used as the basis of the new program model. There are many programs in existence that administrators can examine to ascertain the program's benefits.

Course Credit/Outline

Once the program has been approved, the actual outline has to be prepared. The course must have an outline for students to receive course credit. In many cases new outlines must be approved by several school committees long before a course is offered. If a domestic co-op course is already in existence, this outline can be changed only slightly to allow for an international work component. As the years progress, it may be decided that there is a need for a more specific vehicle for the course and at that time an appropriate co-op course outline may be written for the international program.

Coordinator's Compensation

In the Nassau Community College model, the coordinator traveling to the host country with the students is paid a salary as an adjunct professor of a three-credit course. (Nassau Community College requests that a certain minimum number of students participate in the program before a professor is permitted to travel to the host country with the students.) If there are enough students on the program, it may be considered appropriate to send more than one professor to accompany the students.

During the spring semester, the coordinator should receive compensation for three credit hours a week from the college in order to have sufficient time to meet with the students and also to take care of the necessary correspondence and telephone calls to the host country, as well as any additional weekly chores relating to the program.

The coordinator's housing in the host country and airfare are included in the bid price submitted by the travel agencies and the

cost is absorbed by the students. All other expenses for the program are at present borne by the coordinator. These include the coordinator's meals and any entertaining of personnel in London, necessary travel, and all business telephone calls. At present, this is Nassau Community College policy, although it is obviously to any coordinator's benefit if these expenses can be budgeted into the program.

Job Placements

Once administrative approval and faculty compensation are secured and the course outline complete, student placements and overseas housing must be obtained. Placement leads can come from well-known businesses in the host country as well as from CIEE or any of CIEE's cooperating organizations, such as BUNAC (see introduction). As you find one placement, others will follow quickly through recommendations.

When arranging placements, explain your proposal by letter giving the firm the option of saying yes, no, or will think about it. Make appointments to meet with personnel staff, either in writing or by phone, before leaving the United States and be certain that you are seeing a person with the authority to hire students.

Explain to the personnel representatives that they will receive résumés from the participants during the spring semester. The coordinator ultimately is responsible for selecting specific jobs for each student. The coordinator must let the personnel staff know that he/she will maintain personal contact with the participants and the stores throughout the summer.

If a store agrees to accept a student for placement, several arrangements must be made. These include:

- **Salary**—This should be an amount that will allow the students to pay for their rent and food and still have some money left over. Students on the Nassau Community Co-op are paid at the same level as their British co-workers employed on a part-time basis.

- **Working Conditions**—These will vary, as some employers require an orientation training period, while others put the students to work immediately. Most employers have a dress code which require the young women to wear skirts and

blouses and the men to wear suits. Some businesses have a cafeteria that is government subsidized, and at these stores the students can save money by having their big meal at lunch.

- **Hours**—Basic hours are a usually from 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. with a five-day work week. Most stores require late hours one night a week and work on Saturday. Students receive one day off during the week. I try to arrange for the students to get periodic long weekends off, to give them the opportunity to travel.

- **Health Insurance**—In the United Kingdom, the work place provides National Health Insurance for each student, so that all medical care is covered during their stay. For traveling/working in countries where this is not the case, students should purchase the International Student Identity Card, which offers a basic sickness and accident insurance package. The cost of the card in 1993 is $15.

Travel Arrangements

Public institutions, such as colleges, often have regulations which affect the making of travel arrangements. The most important aspect to stress to the participants when making travel arrangements is flexibility. At many institutions, it is required that travel arrangements be put out for bids to travel agents. The bid will usually include the price of the coordinator's airfare and housing, a cost that is divided among the students as a part of their travel costs. Students pay for their travel costs at the end of the spring semester as a separate fee from their summer tuition. According to Nassau Community College policy, arrangements have to be made to have the students and faculty picked up at the airport abroad by bus and taken directly to their living accommodations. These arrangements are made with the travel agent with their costs being included in the general bid. At the time the bid is submitted, the dates of departure and—if the ticket is not an open one—the return dates for the students must also be determined and set forth.

Housing

The importance of proper housing facilities cannot be emphasized enough. The success of the program is often dependent on this one factor. Throughout the years, one of the most difficult problems for our program has been finding satisfactory living accommodations for the students in the host country.

Because of the nature of the program, and because many participating students live with their parents and are unfamiliar with the many considerations to keep in mind when looking for housing, the housing situation should be resolved by the coordinator. To assure that the housing facilities are suitable for the program, the coordinator should inspect them personally. It is very important to confirm the price of housing in advance to make sure it is in keeping with the students' salaries and also to ascertain if the available rooms are singles, doubles, or triples. A few weeks before departure the coordinator should let the landlord know when the group is arriving, and make sure that the rooms are ready. It is also important to keep in touch and let the landlord know near the time of departure about changes in the number of students and how many are male or female. (When first arranging for the housing, informing the landlord of the approximate number of students should be enough to hold the rooms.)

U.S. students are used to a great number of conveniences such as private baths, showers and toilets, washing machines, telephones, and large rooms. Overseas, housing that is within the students' economic reach seldom has all of these amenities. Students must be made aware of these conditions before they sign up for the program.

The most effective means of assuring that the housing is suitable is to inspect it in advance. Although there are many options for short-term student housing, one must bear in mind the financial limitations of the students while looking for something that is liveable. Cooking facilities should be available. Other concerns include proximity and ease of travel to work, type of neighborhood, and the landlord's feeling about housing U.S. students. In addition, it is important to have a telephone available at the housing facility, as this makes both parents and students feel more secure.

In the experience of the Nassau Community College program, it is best to house all the students in the same facility. This helps preserve the group feeling. Homestays, although they have certain advantages, are not utilized because they split up the group.

Evaluation of Participants

At the end of the work period, the participants are graded based on the employers' evaluations of the students and the students' term papers.

With the employers' evaluations, one must bear in mind that other cultures handle evaluations a bit differently than Americans. The Nassau Community College Co-op program uses a form that was devised working in cooperation with personnel staff abroad. (for sample, see Appendix C.) The assessment part is divided into two areas: "ability" and "personal qualities". Under the ability section there are topics such as (1) knowledge of job; (2) degree of success; (3) reliability; (4) willingness to follow directions; and (5) ability to adapt to policy. Personal qualities include (1) appearance; (2) enthusiasm; (3) relationship with colleagues; (4) relationship with customers; (5) discipline; (6) maturity; (7) punctuality; and (8) attendance. These are graded on a scale of one to five, with five being the highest mark. The evaluation also includes a space for comments. This form is constantly reviewed and always open for revision.

The report that the student prepares for the course may vary, but is essentially a comparison of business practices as students know them to exist in the United States compared to the practices that they find in their work place in the host country. The students must document their daily work experiences by keeping a diary or a written history of differing methodology in business practices. These reports must be returned by the student in sufficient time for the coordinator to submit grades for the summer marking period.

3

Recruiting and Selecting Participants

Informational Meeting for Students

This initial meeting is the main tool to recruit participants and therefore should be very well planned. An effective meeting consists of a complete and enthusiastic explanation of the program. Congratulations should be given to the students because of their interest in doing this new and different program. If at all possible, try to have students at the meeting who have been on the program or abroad previously, preferably in a work situation, to talk about their positive experiences.

Explanation of the Program

A thorough explanation of the program includes such topics as work placement, housing, cost, and a brief description of the host country. It should also be stressed that work placement and accommodations are provided for the participants. You may also wish to talk about travel possibilities, both during and after the program.

It is extremely important that the coordinator stress the fact that this is not just a trip to a foreign country, but is a commitment to work for eight weeks, and that this is a course in which they will be required to write a term paper and upon which they will be graded. The students should also be advised that they are required to attend weekly meetings during the spring semester. These meetings are required so that the students can become as informed as possible

about what to expect while living and working abroad. They also help establish the students as a cohesive group who can depend on each other for support during their stay in the host country. It is suggested that a lab fee be charged to the students for these meetings.

The approximate cost for the summer for the program should also be mentioned at this meeting, including such items as airfare and tuition for the summer semester. Students must pay for a 3-credit summer course for their stay in the host country over and above their travel costs. Students should be informed that they will need sufficient money to live on for a week before beginning work, and some extra. The advice for the student on the Nassau Community College program is to allocate at least $1,500 for their out-of-pocket expenses, which includes travel costs to the host country. Obviously, this will vary from student to student. The salary received by the students should be sufficient for them to live on while they are in the host country, but generally will not cover all a student's travel excursion expenses from the host country or any major frills.

Application Process

At the conclusion of the informational meeting, a request should be made for all interested students to sign a sheet with their names, addresses, and telephone numbers. Each student should then be handed an application form, which they are asked to submit along with a résumé and two recommendations, from an employer and from a faculty member, as well as a short essay on why the student would like to participate in the program. A deadline is given for the application to be returned to the coordinator. Because there may be additional questions that students may wish to ask, make sure to inform the group of the coordinator's office hours and telephone number, and stress the availibility of seeing them individually. Also, the students should be informed at this time that they will soon be contacted for interviews.

Selection of Participants

Interviews

After the résumés and applications have been returned, appointments for interviews with the students are made. There are many ways to conduct the interview process. At Nassau Community Col-

lege the interviewing process involves two steps. The first is a group interview with four to six students, the program coordinator, the department chairperson, and if possible, a school social worker. The second interview is an individual meeting with each applicant.

After the completion of both interviews, all faculty members who participated in the process meet and make their decisions as to the students best qualified to participate in this program. At this time three alternates should also be selected, because students may drop out of the program during the semester. The coordinator wants to ensure that there are an equal amount of placements and students when the time comes to depart for the host country.

The interview process described above may be impractical for your institution and can be adapted according to specific circumstances. If there are a large number of students to interview or if the interviewer is very sure of certain students, adjustments may be made accordingly. One group interview may be all that is necessary. Also, as the program develops, the coordinator may become more certain of selecting successful candidates and decide that the services of a social worker are no longer a necessary part of the process.

Selecting Successful Candidates

A student's grades are not necessarily the true or sole criterion of successful participation in a co-op program. Students with high grade point averages have sometimes not been the most successful participants. Therefore, while grade point averages certainly have a bearing on the selection process, many other elements are analyzed before a final decision is made. These include the student's personality and background, willingness to work, work experience, psychological adaptability, ability to deal with group living, medical history, and other faculty considerations. Unfortunately, some of these elements are very difficult to accurately ascertain at an interview. At times the most vivacious, most likeable, and brightest persons do not necessarily do as well as the quiet student of average intelligence. There is no magic formula in selecting successful international co-op students, except to get to know as much as possible about them during the interview process and to ask for comments from the department's faculty when sending the applicants' names out to them. Naturally, these comments are strictly confidential.

Qualities that have a great bearing on the student's success in the program include the student's ability to interact in a group and

the student's track record away from home, such as camps, trips with friends, etc. The coordinator will learn with each group coming through how to identify successful participants.

The final group of students should be chosen by mid-December. This allows time for the coordinator to begin conducting weekly preparatory meetings with the students during the entire spring semester.

■ 4 ■

PREDEPARTURE PREPARATION

Predeparture Meetings

Predeparture preparation provides much of the structure that leads to a successful program. The coordinator, together with any supporting faculty who will be traveling to the host country, holds a series of meetings (approximately 16) during the spring semester designed to prepare participants and their parents. The majority of these meetings are held with the participants only. However two of these meetings are set aside: one for the coordinator to meet with the parents only; and one for the coordinator, parents, and participants to meet jointly. The meetings take place on a regularly scheduled basis during the spring semester and each last one class period. In retrospect, many alumni are thoroughly convinced that the low drop-out rate and the longevity of the Nassau Community College program can be attributed to a great deal of planning.

During the meetings, the students are told in detail what to expect and what is expected of them while they are living in the host country. Although it might appear that this information could be imparted to them in just a few meetings, a repetitive process has been found to be required to reinforce the information. The meetings also build confidence in the students, who are usually nervous about embarking on what may be their first experience abroad. Because of this, it is best to make attendance at these meetings mandatory.

Having former participants in the program attend at least half of the preparatory meetings is helpful. Questions about nightlife—such

as discos, pub crawling, and so on—as well as questions such as what to look for in a roommate, what clothes to take and what to expect from people at work, can best be answered by former participants.

These weekly meetings give the coordinator and the students an opportunity to get to know and become comfortable with one another. The students must feel free to approach the coordinator with their questions and problems, both before and after their arrival in the host country. At these meetings, interaction with the faculty on a first-name basis is encouraged. Although fully informing participants of practical and technical concerns is important, it is equally important to bring the students together, so that they can be better prepared to live and work together in a foreign country.

Topics for the predeparture meetings include:

- **The History of the Program**— A thorough explanation of its structure and purpose should be one of the first things covered. It is important that students hear the perspective of both the coordinator and former program participants.
- **The History, Government, and Culture of the Host Country**—Participants should be encouraged to do background reading before traveling abroad to help ease their adjustment to a different society.
- **Expectations of the Coordinator and Students**—These should be explored and clarified by having the students ask questions and express expectations in detail. This should help define the program for the group and form the basis for future discussion. Communication games are found to be an excellent method of helping the students get to know each other and discuss their ideas more openly.
- **Familiarization with Possible Co-op Placements**—This includes a thorough explanation of each placement, the business' philosophy and image, and personnel policies including salary, dress, hours, the store's expectations of the students, and the number of students at each placement.
- **Resume Writing**—This topic should be covered very thoroughly during at least one meeting, as the resumes that the students prepare will be forwarded to the employers, and this will be their first opportunity to review the students' abilities. It is recommended that these resumes be

thoroughly scrutinized by the coordinator so that they are not sent out until they are properly completed.

- **Money**—The rate of exchange and monetary differences are essential topics to discuss at the meetings, as is an explanation of the economy, use of credit cards, how much money to take, and where and how students should keep money (including opening bank accounts). Student should be advised to allot at least $1,500 (including the cost of airfare to the host country) for personal expenses. Much of that is spent during the first week when the students are not yet working. This money is also used for travel expenses after the co-op is over. If parents think that it is appropriate, it has been found that a credit card is very helpful when traveling. For emergencies, travelers checks in U.S. dollars are thought to be the most desirable method of transporting and keeping money. A bank account in the host country can be secured through an employer or by recommendation from one of CIEE's cooperating organizations. The coordinator stresses that the students should not have large amounts of cash loose in their rooms or on their persons, because of the obvious dangers.

- **Tips for Packing**—These tips include the type and size of luggage to take, types of clothes for work and recreation, and how much clothing to bring. An important difference to point out is electric voltage, especially in relation to hair dryers, tape decks, stereos, and contact lens cleaning equipement. Students should be made aware of the necessary converters available. Students should also be informed about the need for miscellaneous items such as clothes hangers, sandals for taking a shower, and a money belt.

- **Other Practical Information**—Tube hours, night taxis, and buses are discussed. How to use the telephone in the host country and how to dial the United States, are also covered. Time is also devoted to the ever important differences in language. These tips may take several sessions to cover since they elicit many questions from the students. Input from previous program participants or other students who have just traveled is especially helpful at these meetings.

- **Student Responsibilities**—Good work habits must be stressed, as well as the student's accountability on the job. Students must be reminded that they will be evaluated by their employer and that this will contribute to their final grades. As this is a co-op experience for credit, there are rules and regulations to be followed in order to obtain a passing grade. The student must fully understand the importance of such things as punctuality, dress, appearance, attitude (such as a willingness to learn and to accept criticism), attendance at work, and also that they are representatives of their school and of the United States. The student's commitment to get to work every day on time, alert and able to perform the duties assigned to them, cannot be stressed too much. Honesty in the student's personal and business life must be gone over carefully. If any problems arise, the coordinator will have to deal with them.

- **Parental Concerns**—Separation anxiety on the part of both the students and parents should be addressed at the meetings when the parents are present. On occasion the parents give conflicting messages about whether they support participation in the program. The meeting with the parents and the coordinator without the participants was originally initiated because of the feeling by former participants that their parents needed more familiarization with the program and all the people directly involved in it, without the presence of their child. The first meeting tries to help the parents deal with such things as an unhappy telephone call from their child. It is generally easier for parents to talk about their problems or concerns without their children being there. The second meeting with the parents is held with the students as well. At the meeting the coordinator has ancillary personnel make a short presentation and answer queries from parents and students. A representative of the travel agency, a former student or two with pictures of the accommodations and work place, supporting faculty, and if available, a representative of one of CIEE's cooperating organizations are all good choices for making presentations. The representative from the cooperating organization can give the group a picture of the personality and life in

the host country and explain the procedures for the students' first few days.

- **The Process of Applying**—Students must fill out and submit an application form to CIEE with proof of student status, a recommendation form, and two photographs along with $125 (for academic year 1992–93) as an administrative fee. The students are issued documentation that permits them to work in the host country. They also receive a handbook which explains the legal technicalities of working in the host country. On arrival they will attend an orientation at the offices of the cooperating organization, which will go over program specifics.

- **The International Student Identity Card**—This card enables the student to stay at student hostels while traveling, and may also be useful for other special student discounts such as lower air and train fares, reduced or free admission to many museums, theaters, and other cultural attractions. The International Student Identity Card provides the student with automatic accident and health insurance for travel abroad. The International Student Identity Card must be purchased in the United States to be eligible for the insurance. It is available through CIEE or through college campuses that are authorized by CIEE. The cost of the card for 1993 is $15.

- **Job Placements and Rooming Arrangements**—At one of the last group meetings conducted at school the coordinator asks the students about co-op placement preferences. This will help the professor to make assignments, hopefully to everyone's satisfaction. This should be done near the end of the semester, because the coordinator is in a better position to make a good match between student and job. Also, at this time, the students' résumés should be collected and mailed to the businesses. Copies should be kept by the coordinator in case questions arise about them. The students should also choose their roommates, but here again, the coordinator should be alert to possible problems of some students being excluded or ignored. The coordinator must try to encourage all the students to work out the housing so that the wishes of everyone are considered. The

coordinator will then send out a list of rooming assignments to the housing staff. It is important to try to keep the students in one building, if housing is available in more than one building.

Problems

The meetings must also cover the topics of student-related problems which may arise. It is usually best not to discuss all of them in one meeting, as this can be discouraging. However, it is important that each topic is discussed at some point during the semester.

- **Drugs**—It should be explained to students that if they use illegal drugs overseas and are caught, they will be held responsible under the laws of the host country. The students should understand that the U.S. government, their school, and their parents may not be able get them out of such a difficulty and that penalties can be quite harsh.
- **Health and Physical Condition**—It is of the utmost importance for the coordinator and the employer to have knowledge of a preexisting history of physical and/or mental illness for the student and of the necessity of the student to take medication. This information is only used to benefit the student and this should be made very clear. Serious problems can result from the coordinator being unfamiliar with students' past medical history.
- **Sexual Relationships**—It should be stressed to the students that they are responsible for their own actions. Undesirable situations involving sexually transmitted diseases or pregnancy are even more difficult in a foreign country. The coordinator should always be available to be called upon to help, by either identifying counseling or medical assistance.
- **Student Lifestyle**—The general lifestyle of many community college students living at home with their parents can be restrictive. This can sometimes contribute to a large problem. Parental absence can become a reason for students to take the attitude that they are free to do whatever they want. They sometimes do things which are not in keeping

with their normal behavior. More importantly these rash acts can jeopardize their stay as well as the program itself. Therefore, it is important to stress moderation of behavior to the student so that new-found freedom is used properly.

- **Group Splintering**—Staying a cohesive group provides students with an important support factor which is hard to replace, especially during the extended period in the host country when no faculty is present. It is natural to have special friendships within the group and this is not, in itself, objectionable. However, the danger and tendency is for the group to splinter and separate into cliques that exclude some individuals. This destroys the feeling of camaraderie and can be discouraging and debilitating for the excluded students. This problem is intensified if some students decide to obtain separate housing. At present, it is a requirement at Nassau Community College that the students remain together in the housing that is provided for them.

- **Homesickness**—There are many students who have never been away from home before. There are always some students who find it difficult to adjust to this situation. They either miss their boyfriend, girlfriend, or their parents. The student, therefore, needs as much support as possible from the coordinator during the first weeks and also from their fellow students during the remainder of their stay. It should be stressed that this is an important learning experience for the student and they should learn to adjust to this type of situation.

There is one final important meeting the week after the spring semester ends and prior to departure. At this time participants are encouraged to talk about any last minute problems and go over details of departure, such as when and where to meet at the airport. They are also reminded about passports, travel insurance, packing one day's clothes and medication in their carry-on luggage, and arriving at the airport early.

■ 5 ■

AFTER ARRIVAL OVERSEAS

The coordinator travels to the host country with the students and stays there for approximately ten days. If more than one faculty member travels with the group, they can stagger their stays in the host country. For example, during the initial week, all accompanying faculty would supervise the students. Then in the second week only one faculty member would remain with the students while the other travels. Then, as the second one leaves to travel, the first one returns to spend another week with the students. This assures the students of at least three weeks of faculty supervision instead of the 10 to 14 days with two faculty members. This decision obviously depends upon the size of the student group as well as the coordinator's feelings about the need for supervision.

It has been found best to have the students start work the second week of their stay. During the first week they have the opportunity to adjust to and familiarize themselves with their new surroundings. It is vitally important for the coordinator to be there during this period. It helps the students feel more secure and gives them support during this initial period of adjustment. The coordinator should also stay in a hotel near the students' accommodations and a specific time should be set aside that the coordinator will be available for any questions. An hour in the early evening, e.g. 5:00–6:00 p.m. and an hour at night 10:00–11:00 p.m. are good times for faculty availability, either for seeing students or for student phone calls. Some other personal touches that have been found to be useful are having dinner with the students on their first two nights in the host country and oc-

casionally dropping in at their accommodations to check on them.

Once the students have begun their co-op employment, general availability of the coordinator is important as work related or personal problems may crop up. All problems and complaints should be dealt with before the faculty returns to the United States. It is important that they are handled immediately, since problems have the tendency to magnify with time.

Planned excursions can help the students' adjustment, including trips to the businesses where they will be working. This familiarizes them with their placements and their commute. A walking tour of the city has also proved to be of great value.

The coordinator should have at least one general meeting before the students start to work. At this meeting the students are again given their work assignments, the address, the time and date to begin work, and the name of the person they are to meet. The students, with the coordinator's and cooperating organization's help, have by this time completed all paper work that must be done before work is started. In addition, the students are given their course project and told to mail it to school by a date that will ensure that they will obtain a summer school grade.

The coordinator also uses this time abroad to plan for the coming year—this is an ideal time to seek out new placements and to meet with prospective employers.

Either before arrival or on the first day in the host country, appointments should be made with personnel executives to renew acquaintanceships and to review and answer questions about the students' résumés. It is also important to find out if there are any changes in personnel policy so that you may advise the students. These meetings are vital to the health and continuous growth of the program because of the goodwill engendered and the information imparted and received. It is a good idea to leave the coordinator's home telephone number in the United States with the personnel executive just in case of an emergency after the coordinator has returned to the U.S.

Students' housing for the next year should be arranged at this time and new housing possibilities should also be looked into as back-up housing is always necessary in case of unforeseen problems.

The coordinator should meet once more with all personnel executives just before returning to the U.S. to discuss any problems that may have already arisen. During these meetings, student evaluation forms are given to the personnel executives and they are asked to

mail them to the college by the last week of the student's work. In the course of this last meeting, it is advisable for the faculty member to confirm the work placements for the following year.

Another necessary task is keeping records of how time was utilized every day while abroad. At many institutions, this is a strict requirement of college rules and regulations. Even if this were not the case, however, this record is an extremely valuable tool to look back on and learn from. It is suggested that no matter how tired one is at night, that the coordinator write a diary of each day's events.

After leaving the students with a good solid base to work with for the remainder of their stay, the coordinator returns home, giving the students directions to remain in contact. The students are also told that if they are having any major difficulties, they can call the college in the U.S., which will in turn contact the coordinator. The coordinator should also call the businesses every few weeks to make sure that no serious problems have arisen.

■ 6 ■

CONCLUSION

This manual has set forth how to conduct a co-op program. Each year is different as students differ and have varying needs and problems. The strength of this program model, however, is its flexibility in being able to adapt to the needs of participants, faculty, and administrators.

Many changes have been made to the Nassau Community College program during its 14-year history and I am certain that it will continue to change and grow in the future. Nassau Community College is considering operating the program outside of London in the future, perhaps in another large industrial city in the UK such as Birmingham or Manchester. While conducting this program in the UK is facilitated by a common language, this model can be applied to non-English-speaking countries as long as the students have sufficient language skills. Over the 14 years of the program the number of students participating has increased, as have the number of employers. Some employers have been dropped from the program and others picked up in their place. For me, this program has been very rewarding because almost every student who has participated in the program has benefited and matured as a result of this learning experience. Most students come back from this work experience enthusiastically in favor of the program. This is due not only to their stay in London and the friendships they have made, but also to the opportunity that they have had to see and experience how business is conducted in another country. As a result of their experiences, they have matured immeasurably. It also has afforded the student the

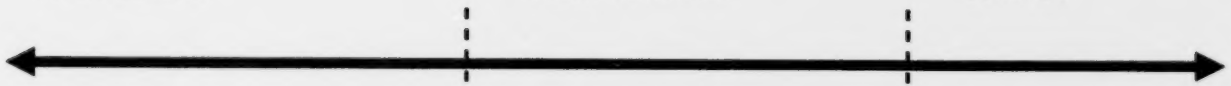
opportunity to travel throughout Europe, and many students have taken advantage of this. For some students the work experience obtained in the UK has proven invaluable when they seek jobs in their chosen field. Some students have elected to remain in London, have obtained jobs there, and have stayed for extended periods after the program was over.

It has been said by both professionals in the retailing industry and past participants that the international experience has resulted in the student obtaining jobs that would otherwise not have been available to them. Needless to say, this is the highest form of reward for a professor. Program alumni now include an international textile executive, an international American Express executive, two import coordinators and the area coordinator of a large United States company with a chain of stores that has now expanded their market by opening locations in the UK.

The net result is that this program has not only been beneficial to the students, the college and myself, but also to the employers in the UK and the English people. They have enthusiastically received our students, have learned from them, and have enthusiastically approved of their work. It is my wish that you too take advantage of the personal and professional gratification that this program offers.

Appendix A

PROGRAM TIMETABLE



September:

- Departmental approval to assess feasibility
- Promotion of program in classes
- General departmental letter announcing informational meeting
- Obtain administrative approval

October:

- Informational meeting takes place
- Application and interview process begins
- Create course outline
- Letters to businesses re job placements
- Obtain job placements

December:

- Selection of students finalized

- Weekly meetings for students
- Resumes sent to personnel staff abroad
- Travel arrangements are made
- Housing arrangements are made

April/May:

- Housing arrangements finalized
- Students pay their travel and summer tuition costs

- Arrival in the host country
- General meeting with students before work commences
- Planning for coming year (employment and housing)
- Meetings with employers
- Student evaluations and assignments received.

APPENDIX B

Disclaimer Waiver and Release

I, _____, a voluntary participant in the (school) cooperative work study program in (city and country) during the Summer of (Year), without reservation and realizing the full legal significance of my action, do hereby voluntarily waive, renounce and release, on behalf of myself, my heirs and my estate, any and all claims I may have against (school), the County of _____, or any officer, agent, employee of either the County of _____, or (school) or any staff member of (school) accompanying this trip, or their heirs or estates, of whatever nature for any injury, loss, damage, accident, delay, irregularity, or expense caused by any strikes, war, weather, sickness, quarantine, government restrictions or regulations or arising from any act or omission of any airline, shipping, railroad, bus company, hotel, restaurant, agency, or any individual, or for any other cause whatsoever in connection therewith.

I understand and acknowledge that no officer, agent, employee, faculty member of the College or of the County of _____ will be with me during the entire study program, and that (school) and/or the County of _____ are not providing chaperones or other supervision for this program, and I have voluntarily elected to participate in this program with this knowledge and understanding.

Neither the County of _____, (school), nor any of their employees or agents will or has authority to accept any responsibility or liability for inconvenience, loss, damage or injury to property or to any person caused by failure of facilities and services or otherwise or any delay by a transporation company that might occur during this program. I further understand and agree that any arrangements made by any employees of the (school) or the County of _____ or handling of any monies in connection with this trip in no way creates any relationship, liability, contract, obligations or any commitment to me by either (school) or the County of _____ concerning this trip or the travel or lodging arrangements in connection therewith.

_____
Signature

State of _____

County of _____

On this __ day of _____, 19 __ before me personally came _____, to me known and known to me to be the person described in and who executed the foregoing instrumnent and he/she duly acknowledged to me that he/she executed the same.

_____
Notary Public

APPENDIX C

NASSAU COMMUNITY COLLEGE
LONDON CO-OP WORK STUDY REVIEW

Name of Student: _____ **Date:** _____

Reviewed By: _____ **Department:** _____

Ability	Assessment					Comments
	5	4	3	2	1	
Knowledge of job						
Degree of success						
Reliability						
Willingness to follow directions						
Ability to adapt to store policies						
Personal Qualities						
	5	4	3	2	1	
Appearance						
Enthusiasm						
Relationship with colleagues						
Relationship with customers						
Discipline						
Maturity						
Punctuality						
Attendance						

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